

Amendments To The Claims

This listing will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A ring mechanism for a loose-leaf binder comprising:

a thin, elongate plate,  
at least two ring members supported by the elongate plate for relative movement of the ring members between an open position in which the ring members are spaced apart and loose-leaf pages may be received on and removed from at least one of the ring members, and a closed position in which the ring members are engaged to form a ring which is configured to capture the loose-leaf pages on the ring while permitting movement of the pages along the ring,

a pair of elongate leaves disposed beneath the elongate plate and carried by the elongate plate, the leaves each mounting a respective one of the ring members and being pivotable relative to the elongate plate between said open and closed positions of the ring members,

the elongate plate having longitudinal ends, at least one of the longitudinal ends including first and second end portions located on one transverse side of the elongate plate, said first and second end portions being bent over to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt.

2. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 1 further comprising a space separating said first and second end portions into distinct tabs extending from the elongate plate.

3. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 2 wherein said first end portion is bent over onto the second end portion.

4. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 3 wherein said first and second end portions are free of bends about a common fold line.

5. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 4 wherein each of said first and second end portions has a single bend.

6. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 3 wherein the elongate plate further comprises third and fourth end portions on a transverse side of the elongate plate opposite the transverse side of the first and second end portions at said one longitudinal end, and a space separating the third and fourth end portions, said third and fourth end portions being bent over to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt.

7. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 6 wherein the elongate plate further comprises first and second end portions at one transverse side of the elongate plate at another longitudinal end of the elongate plate, a space separating the first and second end portions, third and fourth end portions on an opposite transverse side of the elongate plate at said other longitudinal end, and a space separating the third and fourth end portions, said first and second end portions and said third and fourth end portions at said other longitudinal end being bent over to present longitudinally facing surfaces which are blunt.

8. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 7 further comprising a lever pivotally mounted on the elongate plate generally at said one longitudinal end for actuating movement of the ring members between said open and closed positions.

9. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 8 further comprising another lever pivotally mounted on the elongate plate at said other longitudinal end for actuating movement of the ring members between said open and closed positions.

10. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 9 wherein the levers each have slots, one slot receiving one of the first and second end portions, and another slot receiving one of the third and fourth end portions at respective longitudinal ends of the elongate plate.

11. (Withdrawn/ currently amended) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 10 ~~wherein further comprising a pair of elongate leaves carried by the elongate plate, the leaves each mounting a respective one of the ring members and being pivotable relative to the elongate plate between said open and closed positions of the ring members, the leaves being are operatively connected to the levers whereby the levers actuate pivoting movement of the leaves.~~

12. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 6 wherein the first end portion is longer than the second end portion at each longitudinal end of the elongate plate, and the third end portion is longer than the fourth end portion at each longitudinal end of the elongate plate.

13. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 12 wherein a distal end of the first end portion tapers from a first length at an inner lateral edge of the first end portion to a second length at an outer lateral edge of the first end portion, the first length being greater than the second length, and a distal end of the third end portion tapers from a first length at an inner lateral edge of the third end portion to a second length at an outer lateral edge of the third end portion, the first length of said third end portion being greater than said second length of said third end portion.

14. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 6 wherein the distal end of each of the first, second, third and fourth end portions is generally perpendicular to the elongate plate.

15. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 2 wherein the space comprises a cutout in the elongate plate.

16. (Original) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 1 wherein said first and second end portions are in flatwise contact with one another.

17. (Currently amended) A ring mechanism ~~as set forth in claim 16 wherein~~ for a loose-leaf binder comprising:  
a thin, elongate plate,  
at least two ring members supported by the elongate plate  
for relative movement of the ring members between an open  
position in which the ring members are spaced apart and loose-  
leaf pages may be received on and removed from at least one of  
the ring members, and a closed position in which the ring members

are engaged to form a ring which is configured to capture the loose-leaf pages on the ring while permitting movement of the pages along the ring,

the elongate plate having longitudinal ends, at least one of the longitudinal ends including first and second end portions located on one transverse side of the elongate plate, said first and second end portions are being in flatwise contact with one another and bent over about a common fold line to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt.

18. (Original) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 17 wherein each of said first and second end portions has a single bend.

19. (Original) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 17 wherein the elongate plate further comprises third and fourth end portions on a transverse side of the elongate plate opposite the transverse side of the first and second end portions at said one longitudinal end, said third and fourth end portions being in flatwise contact with one another and bent over about a common fold line to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt.

20. (Currently amended) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 19 wherein the elongate plate further comprises first fifth and second sixth end portions at one transverse side of the elongate plate at another longitudinal end of the elongate plate, said first fifth and second sixth end portions being in flatwise contact with one another, third seventh and fourth eighth end portions on an opposite transverse side of the elongate plate at said other longitudinal end, said third seventh and fourth eighth end portions being in flatwise contact with one another, said

~~first fifth~~ and ~~second sixth~~ end portions at said other longitudinal end being bent over about a common fold line to present longitudinally facing surfaces which are blunt, and said ~~third seventh~~ and ~~fourth eighth~~ end portions at said other longitudinal end being bent over about a common fold line to present longitudinally facing surfaces which are blunt.

21. (Original) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 20 further comprising a lever pivotally mounted on the elongate plate generally at said one longitudinal end for actuating movement of the ring members between said open and closed positions, and another lever pivotally mounted on the elongate plate at said other longitudinal end for actuating movement of the ring members between said open and closed positions.

22. (Original) A ring mechanism as set forth in claim 1 in combination with the loose-leaf binder, the ring mechanism being secured to the loose-leaf binder.

23. (Withdrawn) A ring mechanism for a loose-leaf binder comprising:

a thin, elongate plate,  
at least two ring members supported by the elongate plate for relative movement of the ring members between an open position in which the ring members are spaced apart and loose-leaf pages may be received on and removed from at least one of the ring members, and a closed position in which the ring members are engaged to form a ring which is configured to capture the loose-leaf pages on the ring while permitting movement of the pages along the ring,

the elongate plate having longitudinal ends, at least one of the longitudinal ends including first and second end portions

located on one transverse side of the elongate plate, said first and second end portions being bent over to present a longitudinally facing surface which is blunt and free of bends about a common fold line.

24-30. Cancelled.